BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Tsuruyo Kimura, 73, lau hala store owner

> *"When the war [World War II] break out and then the lau hala were in boom, that's the time everybody cut [down] lots of the coffee trees and then planted lau hala trees. Until the price of the coffee came up, then the lau hala tree went down. Because if they don't weave and they don't use, that's a nuisance, eh? The rats will just gather in the lau hala tree. So, they all chop down. Now, I think, there's a shortage of lau hala leaves."*

Tsuruyo Kimura was born in Wahiawa, Oahu, on April 30, 1908 to Sue and Gohei Fujiwara of Yamaguchi-ken, Japan.

In ca. 1913, Tsuruyo and her father moved to Kona where they helped on a friend's coffee farm in Napoopoo, then moved to Chong Camp in Kealakekua. About a year later, Gohei began farming coffee on leased lands above the present Konawaena School. Except for a year at Napoopoo School, Tsuruyo attended Konawaena School through the eighth grade. She also attended Hongwanji Nippongo Gakkō and Kyōritsu Nippongo Gakkō.

In 1926, Tsuruyo married Torao Kimura of Holualoa and went to work in the family's Y. Kimura Store. Besides running a store, the family farmed cotton and coffee and worked with lau hala--with the help of hired hands.

During the 1930s, Torao drove Tsuruyo around Kona exchanging groceries for lau hala goods, some of which were sold in the store or shipped to Honolulu. Tsuruyo and Torao also visited Puna and other areas to buy lau hala for hats that were sold to plantation stores.

About 1960, the family store was closed and Tsuruyo opened Kimura Lauhala Shop in Kailua. Then in 1975, she moved her business to the old store and home in Holualoa where she continues to serve her customers.

Tsuruyo is a member of the Kona Daifukuji Fujinkai and the Kamalumalu Kumiai.

Tape No. 9-34-2-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Tsuruyo Kimura (TK)

December 20, 1980

Holualoa, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Faye Komagata (FK)

[NOTE: The first recorded interview with Mrs. Kimura was not transcribed due to technical problems.]

FK: This is an interview with Mrs. Tsuruyo Kimura at her home in Holualoa. Today is December 20, 1980.

Mrs. Kimura, where were you born? And can you tell me when?

TK: I was born in Wahiawa, Oahu, on April 30, 1908.

FK: Can you tell me a little about your family? You know, where you were living, what your parents were doing?

TK: Well, that time, I was too young to remember, but I remember that my father used to work in a plantation. Then, we were living in a camp in Wahiawa. I think that's all, eh? He was working in a plantation.

FK: You said you had an older sister before?

TK: I cannot remember. I think she died before I was born.

FK: So, at that time, there were just the two of you, yeah? Children.

TK: Mm hmm [yes].

FK: What brought you to Kona?

TK: Well, I'm not sure, but I think my father and mother were separated. So, I think he wanted to bring me away from her. So, he took me and came to Kona.

FK: Where were your parents from, though, originally?

TK: From Yamaguchi-ken. Japan, yeah?

FK: So, about how old were you when you came to Kona? Can you describe how you came, too?

TK: Hmm. . . . I kind of remember, no? From Wahiawa, it was not auto, though. Just like a carriage, yeah? Then, we took the boat. I know that because I don't like any kind of riding. I got sick and sick.

(Laughter)

TK: So, we took--I wonder if that not Humuula or. . . . The first boat, eh? I don't know. Then, we came to Kona. Kailua, yeah? Then, from Kailua, we took another carriage, went over to Napoopoo where, I think, one of my father's friend were living there. So we went there. They had a big coffee farm, too. So, he stayed there for a while and helped coffee farming.

FK: How old were you?

TK: I think I must be about five or six.

FK: When you said you went by "carriage," you meant by horse?

TK: Yeah, yeah. Horse. (Chuckles)

FK: Do you know how long you were with that farming family?

TK: Hmm. . . . I started going to Napoopoo School. And then, I kind of remember that we walk up and down the coffee trail to go to school. So, I think we stayed about a year, I think.

FK: Do you remember the name of the family?

TK: Hmm. . . . I don't know. A good friend was living there named Takemoto. I think my father's friend was Takemoto. Maybe he came from the same Yamaguchi-ken. But we were working for another family, you know. I can't remember.

FK: So, where did you go after that?

TK: From Napoopoo School . . .

(Taping interrupted, stops, then resumes.)

TK: Yeah. From there, I think, we moved to. . . . They had a big camp called Chong Camp. That's below Konawaena School. Not the former one; the recent Konawaena School, yeah? Below. They had a large cane field, too, around there. All over was cane field, before. Even [where] the new Konawaena School [is]--that was all cane field. I remember we went up there to hoe.

FK: Oh, even you had to help?

TK: Yeah. (Chuckles) I remember going in there. So, we went to Chong Camp. In the camp, we don't cook individually, see. There is one lady cooking. Then, everybody goes there to eat. Just like the army camp, I think. (Chuckles) Then, I think, so much a month, they going deduct or something like that, yeah? So, during the day or whenever we don't go to school, then, I have to stay in that long house, where everybody sleeps together. It's a camp house.

Then, we didn't stay too long over there. Then, my father lease a place up in Kingsley. Now it belongs to Greenwell, but I wonder, was it Greenwell from the first starting? Maybe so, no? Yeah, so he lease Kingsley and stayed there. Quite long, we stayed there.

FK: What were you doing there?

TK: Oh, from there, I used to go Konawaena School. And then, my father keeps the coffee farming.

FK: Did you have to help with the coffee farm, too?

TK: Yeah, during the coffee time, yeah. Lately, we don't have coffee vacation, but, no? That time, we didn't have, too. So, when the coffee is ripe, on the weekends, we'll help.

FK: Did he hire any pickers or workers?

TK: I think, sometimes, he did, you know. I remember, sometimes, other people comes and pick coffee for us, so.

FK: What ethnic group were they? What kind of . . .

TK: [TK mishears question.] No, no. Individual will come.

FK: Oh, Japanese?

TK: Yeah.

FK: How about your house? What kind of house was that that you were living in?

TK: A wooden house. Although the floor was not wooden, though. I think it was mud, already packed so it's so hard. Then you can sweep on the top (laughs) there. But the sleeping quarter is all wood floor. Only the kitchen.

FK: So, what kind of stove did you use, then?

TK: No, wood. Just like . . .

FK: Wood-burning?

TK: Yeah, wood-burning. Not the stove. (Laughs) No stove.

FK: Do you remember how many rooms you had in your house?

TK: No, just upstairs were the bedroom--one whole room. And then, down in the under house was the kitchen. So, there was another small room in the kitchen side. So, two could use, see?

FK: What did you use the other room for, then? The room by the kitchen?

TK: By the kitchen, well, when you have someone wants to stay with you or something, then you can let them have the upstairs. Father and I could sleep downstairs.

FK: Did you have beds?

TK: No, no bed. Just the comforter. (Laughs)

FK: Futon?

TK: Yeah.

FK: So, who did the cooking?

TK: My father.

FK: What kind of foods did he cook, then?

TK: Mostly vegetable, yeah? Once in a while, you could have meat. Fishing, my father used to like go fishing.

FK: Where did you get your vegetables?

TK: Those days, I think, everybody plants; and like now, lots of neighbors will give you. (Laughs) That's how, I think, I don't remember, but.

FK: Do you remember what kind of vegetables, though, you had?

TK: Well, any kind. What we have now, I think. [Those were] olden times, though, no? Maybe radish, eggplant. I think those were, no?

FK: Did you have tsukemono, too?

TK: Yeah, tsukemono is a main dish, I think.

(Laughter)

TK: Those days, nobody will have tossed salad or something like that. (Chuckles) No fancy thing. (Laughs) Never did have dislikes, so I don't remember. Any kind of vegetables, whatever papa cooks, goes.

FK: Do you remember who he sold his coffee to? Or where?

TK: Right after that, I don't know to whom he sold, yeah?

FK: No, I mean, the picked coffee?

TK: Oh, picked coffee, I think, was all to Hind.

FK: Oh, Captain Cook Company?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. I think they were the only ones, those days.

FK: No, there were others.

TK: Yeah? No, I think was Captain Cook. Hind, yeah?

FK: Did you have stores near you that you used to go to?

TK: No. Not nearby. Kingsley is way up there. So, the near store is Abe Store. Now it's Mr. Jyo's building, eh? There was a store there. They had pretty big store. And the other one is Ikeda--Ikeda Store.

FK: You said you learned sewing. Did you learn that in school, too?

TK: Yeah, when I was about fourth grade. At first, we learn at school. And then, between time, there was a lady named Koshi. I used to go to her place and ask her how to cut this one or that, and then she used to teach me. Then, I learned from her. (Laughs)

FK: What about a sewing machine?

TK: Sewing machine? Sewing machine, shee, I don't know when, but my father must have bought for me. I had machine. (Chuckles) Yeah. So, from fourth grade, as soon as I learned how to draft that, then I used to sew all my dresses. (Laughs) Those days were--what do you call that? Even now, they do have joining from the shoulder. Just like they call it a "kappa dachi." You don't put a separate sleeve, but. Just like a muumuu kind.

FK: Oh, it drapes?

TK: No drape. Just straight cut. And then, we used to use a belt way down by the hip. And one straight piece. Yeah, was quite long, though, we used to use that pattern. Then, later on, I used to draft my own. I don't know how to draft, but I just take the measurement. If someone would ask me to sew for them, then I'll just take the measurement of the shoulder, where the sleeve will come, and then the bust. We all had a joining on the waist, those days. I don't know how I start to do that, but I used to draft my own and (laughs) then sew.

FK: How old were you when you doing that?

TK: That was when I was about sixth grade, I think. Yeah, around sixth, I think.

FK: People would pay you for sewing for them?

TK: Mm hmm [yes].

FK: Like about how much would, let's say, a dress cost to make, then?

TK: Oh, I just sew for the thread or something like that.

FK: Oh, exchange for something?

TK: Just about 50 cents or so.

FK: Oh, just for the cost of the materials you use?

TK: Mm [yes], cost of the thread, and maybe the button. (Laughs)

FK: Did you enjoy doing that?

TK: Yeah, I did like it. Funny, yeah?

FK: So, you were attending Konawaena School at the time?

TK: Mm hmm [yes], mm hmm.

FK: What kind of courses were you taking there?

TK: Not special course. A regular school.

FK: What special subjects did you like when you were going there?

TK: Oh, what I liked? Ah, I not good in school, so I didn't care for anything. But sewing, I used to like--handworks. I used to like handworks.

FK: Was there anything else besides sewing with hand that you do?

TK: No, those days, I don't think so.

FK: What subject did you like the least, then?

TK: What subject? I don't know. Mathematics, I think. (Laughs)

FK: Do you remember any of your teachers?

TK: Yeah. When I was, let me see, on eighth grade, I think, I used to have Mr. Finley, Miss Reese. I think Mr. Crawford was our principal.

FK: So, how many years did you go to Konawaena or to what grade?

TK: Only till eighth grade.

FK: Was there a reason for stopping school?

TK: No. Just that, those days, the old folks won't care girls to continue schooling, I think. Most of our friends all quit at eighth grade. Very seldom goes to high school.

FK: Did you live at Kingsley all this time?

TK: Yeah, mm hmm. Until I graduate Konawaena, I live in Kingsley.

FK: What did you do after you finished school?

TK: Then, on a vacation, I went out to the cane field, go with my father to the cane field. Then, after that, I start to go to Nakao Tailor.

FK: What did you do there?

TK: Learn trousers, shirts. So, I learn lots from there.

FK: How did you go there to learn?

TK: I commute from home. They have the machine, see? Then, he teach me how to draft the pants. Take the measurement of the person. So, he takes lots of orders, and then I'll draft according to the size. I draft my own, see? Then, I finish up the pants.

FK: How long were you doing that with Mr. Nakao?

TK: Maybe I went about nearly couple years, I think. On the second year, what orders he take, I used to sew for outsiders. First was my practice, no? But the second year, he used to let me sew.

FK: So, then, you were paid for it, too?

TK: Yeah, later. I don't know how much, but (laughs) I was paid.

FK: When you were going <u>hō hana</u> with your father, were you being paid for that, too?

TK: Yeah, they pay. Even children. During the summer months.

FK: You remember about how much it was?

TK: No, I can't remember.

FK: The money went to your . . .

TK: Papa.

(Laughter)

FK: So, do you recall having spending money?

TK: Oh, yes. Spending money is. . . . Ho, now, you tell to the children [how much it was], they laugh at you. (Laughs)

FK: How was it then?

TK: When we were small, we used to get 10 or 15 cents. That was good money. When graduation time or whatever occasion, we all dress up and we have the kozukai. That was a good money for us. (Laughs)

FK: Did you go to Japanese school, then?

TK: Yeah, I went until eighth.

FK: Where was that?

TK: We went to that Hongwanji school. And there was another school, kyōritsu gakkō. Where the Christian church [is now], below, there was a Japanese school. And those days, up till we went till sixth grade, there was a Konawaena School where Mrs. Cushingham lives now. They were the schools, see? And then, Japanese school was one kyōritsu and then one in Hongwanji. I used to go in Hongwanji school. Then, they combine together. Then, the Hongwanji was out and we all went to kyōritsu gakkō. But I don't know what they named that school. Not the Hongwanji. I wonder if they went with the name, kyōritsu gakkō, ne?

FK: Dokuritsu?

TK: Dokuritsu Gakkō.

FK: What kind of courses did you have at Japanese school? What did you study?

TK: Japanese school? Nothing special, those days. Everybody takes the same. Although, those days, they used to have with the suzuri [inkstone], yeah?

FK: Oh, shūji [calligraphy]?

TK: Shūji. We used to ogyōgi shite kara, kō sumashite, ne? [We'd learn discipline and proper writing posture.] Ji o kaitari, ne? [We'd write the characters. . . .] Ima are ga nai, ne? [It's not offered now, is it?] Oh, you had? With that? With the fude [brush]?

FK: Yeah. Not everyone does that, though, nowdays. Before, I guess, most people were . . .

TK: Yeah, we all have to have that. It's not that if you don't want, you don't have to take, no. Everyone has to take that.

FK: What about, like, civics courses or the shūshin? About manners and. . . .

TK: When we were going to Hongwanji School, the Hongwanji no oku-san [minister's wife] used to teach us that.

FK: Teach what?

TK: How to go in front of the altar. And then, every Saturday, we all kneel down and we wipe the whole hall. (Chuckles) Yeah, she was good.

FK: Other than your studies, then, you have to do other activities, too, with Japanese school?

TK: Activities. Not much activities, those days.

FK: How about for holidays?

TK: When they have some kind of emperor's birthday or something like that, then we used to have a undōkai [field day]. And then, we'll have a spoon race or whatever race, we used to have that. Long time ago, we used to have down at the Greenwell's pasture. That was a big day.

FK: Like a community?

TK: Yeah, the whole community get together. And those days, when the emperor's picture, you know, someone holds that and pass by, then everybody saikeirei [bowed low] to that. So (laughs) you can't even see the picture of emperor.

(Laughter)

FK: You mean, there's a procession?

TK: Yeah. Then, we all have to bow. Now, I laugh, myself. I say, those days, you can't even glance at the picture. Everybody's bowing (chuckles) down.

FK: What other things did you do on that day?

TK: Well, they have some wrestling.

FK: Oh, you mean, sumō?

TK: Yeah.

FK: How about food?

TK: The food, I think, just like a picnic lunch. I can't remember.

FK: On those occasions, did you go with your father?

TK: Mm hmm [yes], mm hmm. All school occasion, all the parents used to come out. That was a big day for themself, too, I think. (Laughs) And in school, you know, whatever we write, the teachers will all paste it on the wall, see? So, they'll all come, and check, and see (laughs).

FK: So, you had exhibits, too, of all your work?

TK: Yeah. For everybody, that. And then, on Saturdays, I think, we used to learn sewing kimono. Hongwanji no oku-san. First we practice on how to go about with the . . .

FK: Basting?

TK: Yeah, with the thimble and. . . .

FK: All by hand?

TK: Yeah. Then, they would start the piece of tanmono [cloth]. Then, the length is sewn. So, you take . . . [TK uses hand motions to describe measuring and folding of material.]

FK: You measure 'em, too?

TK: Yeah, with the monosashi, the Japanese ruler. Then, she will teach. Then, sleeve is twice. (Chuckles) [TK uses motions.]

FK: About how old were you when you learned the kimono, then?

TK: Oh, maybe, was around (sixth or) seventh grade, I think. Those days, there were morning class and afternoon class.

FK: On Saturday?

TK: No, every day--Japanese school. I think, the elder group goes in the morning. Early in the morning, before going to their English school. They'll go to Japanese school first, then go to English school. Then, our younger one will go after school. Two group, I think, they used to have.

FK: What kind of games did you used to play?

TK: Well, jump rope. That, we all pull the vine, eh? (TK makes snapping sound.)

FK: Oh, so you used the vine?

TK: That's the rope, see? Vine. And then, they used to say "steal

stone." About five, six in both group.

FK: Two groups?

TK: Yeah. And then, they leave the stone on each goal, I think.

FK: You have a goal line?

TK: Yeah. And then, we both go out, never to be caught, see? If you are caught, then you have to go to the other side who caught you. And then, that's the time, I think, you usually take the stone from them. I think that's how the game went, I think.

FK: You didn't throw the stone or anything?

TK: No, no. That and hide-and-seek. That's the time I remember because I got big, big, big lump over here.

FK: On your forehead?

TK: Yeah, I was going around this corner, and the other side was coming to this corner, and we bang! (Chuckles) Other side didn't get, but I got the big, big, big lump over here. Ho, the big lump. The teacher roll [it] with the soda bottle. Ho, was sore . . .

FK: Used the soda bottle and was . . .

TK: Yeah! She was rolling from here (TK points to head) with that.

(Laughter)

TK: Ah, was really sore.

FK: Was that one way of getting rid of a lump?

TK: I think so, no? I think you roll it, no? If it's by hand, it's all right, but with the soda bottle, she stay roll for me. Ah, those days.

FK: Did boys play those games, too?

TK: It's funny, no? Those days, boys play their own and girls, girls. We didn't mix. (Laughs) Funny, yeah? Now, everybody is all equal. They don't mind, but those days, girls is girls; boys are boys.

FK: What about bean bags, like that?

TK: Yeah, yeah. Bean bag and jacks and ball.

FK: You had jacks and . . .

TK: Yeah. We did have that. (Chuckles)

FK: Did you ever go down to the beach with your father?

TK: Yeah, vacation. Summer vacation, then my father would buy all the foods. And then, pack on the donkey, and then we all walk and go down to Kaawaloa.

FK: Oh, Napoopoo. Kaawaloa.

TK: Kaawaloa. We used to go there. And then there was a big--Mr. Paris' home, I think. We used to rent. Big house, so lots of the families will go down, and then, occupy one room, each.

FK: Oh, the neighbors?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. That was the only vacation fun, I think.

FK: That was nice.

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. Then, we stayed about one week, you know, on the beach. So, early in the morning, we'll wake up early. I'll wake up early and pick up all the kiawe beans for the donkey food. Then, my father will go out fishing, bring back the fish dinner. Every night is fish dinner. (Laughs)

FK: Then, you had a donkey?

TK: Yeah. Most every home had donkey those days because they have to pack coffee.

FK: While you were at the Nakao's, you said that was when this talk came up about your getting married?

TK: (Chuckles) Yeah.

FK: Can you tell me how it came about?

TK: Well, Mr. Okimoto first approached me. He told me that the Kimuras have asked him to see if I was willing to get married. I said, "No, I'm not." So, well, that was that. That was already pau for that time. (Laughs) But look like Kimura didn't give up. He send another people here (laughs).

FK: Who came next?

TK: And then, there was a person named Shizuma. That's Mr. Chitose Abe's stepfather. He used to live with his mother. He came up, and then asked Mr. Uchida, our Japanese school teacher in Kealakekua. So, not Mr Shizuma came up to see personally, but Mr. Uchida came up to see me. But the answer was still the same. I said no. Then, I see my father kind of worried and got sick. So, I kind of

felt sorry for him.

(Laughter)

FK: Because you were a good girl?

TK: I don't know. So, I decided. I say, "Okay. To please my father." So, I came to Holualoa.

FK: But you said you were underage.

TK: Yeah. I was underage, so the parents have to go up to the notary public and sign the paper, I think. We went up to Mr. [Walter] Ackerman. He was up in Bank of Hawaii, I think.

FK: What happened after that? Oh, did you know your husband?

TK: No, I didn't know him. Those days, if the parents know, everything was okay, I think.

(Laughter)

TK: Even [though] the young ones don't know anything. (Laughs)

FK: How did you meet your husband?

TK: Well, the day that we have to go up to the notary public, that's the first time I met him. Just like a olden time--a Japan bride, I think, yeah?

FK: What did you do? I mean, when you see each other for the first time?

TK: For the first time? I don't think anything. Just say, "Hello," that's all.

(Laughter)

TK: Then, they brought [me] home to Kimuras.

FK: Brought you home?

TK: Yeah. From that on, I didn't go back.

FK: You weren't married yet?

TK: Yeah. I came here, and then. . . . Anyway I got married, though, because December 12, 1925, that was my marriage.

FK: That's when you came to Holualoa?

TK: Yeah, Holualoa. Mm hmm.

FK: But you had the ceremony . . .

TK: Ceremony on January, I think, was.

FK: So, what did you do when you came to Kimuras?

TK: Over here? What I did over here? Just help around the store.

FK: Oh, from the time you came?

TK: Mm hmm [yes].

FK: Must have been quite a different place from . . .

TK: Coffee land, eh?

FK: . . . what you were used to.

TK: Yeah (chuckles).

FK: How large was the family here? Or who was living here?

TK: I think, eight of them were living--the younger in-laws. Father and mother, and then the eight children.

FK: How about workers?

TK: Yeah. They used to have four or five workmen here.

FK: Living here, too?

TK: Yeah, living here.

FK: What about your father, though?

TK: My father married a Takeguchi mama. So, he were living with her.

FK: Where was he living, then?

TK: Then, when I got married and came here, he was already married to this woman. We had moved to another place. In Kingsley, but below the old house. From there, I got married and came here. Until he pass away, he was still in there.

FK: What did you know about Holualoa before you were married?

TK: Never been to Holualoa.

FK: From Kealakekua to . . .

TK: Yeah, those days, Kealakekua and Holualoa, that's far away. Just

like going to Hilo or someplace.

(Laughter)

FK: What was your work here, then, after you came to Kimuras?

TK: Over here? I took up sewing, so more on a seamstress. Then, I used to have few girls coming over to learn.

FK: Oh, to learn from you here?

TK: Yeah. So, I used to teach them sewing. And then, after everybody stopped coming, then I start to sew for the outside.

FK: What about the store?

TK: Those days, my mother-in-law and father[-in-law] were taking care, yet. And between time, I used to watch.

FK: What kind of store was it?

TK: General. Everything. From food to dry goods.

FK: They also had coffee land, you said?

TK: Yeah. They had the coffee land, the cotton land. That's about sixty acres.

FK: About how much was in coffee and how much in cotton?

TK: You mean, acreage? Cotton was not much, but the rest were all coffee.

FK: Most of it in coffee, then?

TK: Yeah. Mostly was coffee.

FK: So, with the eight in-laws and the workers, what kind of jobs did they have to do, the work? The workers and the rest of the family.

TK: The workers? Oh, those days, they didn't spread too much poison like nowdays. Everybody has to hoe.

FK: Weed?

TK: Yeah, [with the] hoe. Prune the trees, pick coffee.

FK: Maybe we should take one at a time, then. How about the cotton? What was involved in that?

TK: Cotton? No, the same workers do. And then, between, we used to go pick, too.

FK: What do you do with cotton? What is the process or what do you do?

TK: Cotton? We pick, bring home, then my in-laws had the machine to segregate that--take off the seed. So, we used to take off the seed, and she used to dry the cotton out on the platform.

FK: That's the same coffee platform?

TK: Yeah. And then, it fluffs up, huh? Then, she [mother-in-law] used to make a futon--comforters and go around and sell.

FK: Where did she sell?

TK: Around this island.

FK: Oh, around the whole island?

TK: Yeah. My husband used to drive the big bus, and she used to pack in there, and then she goes around.

FK: Did they sell anything else besides the futon?

TK: Yeah. When she goes to Waimea, she sells the futon, then on the return, she buys the vegetables and sell the vegetables, and (chuckles) come home.

FK: Oh, along the way?

TK: Yeah.

FK: The cotton, do you remember what time of the year it was usually ripe? I don't know if you say "ripe," but ready. Like, around now?

TK: Shee, I cannot remember what month.

FK: It's different from coffee?

TK: About the same time, I think, no? Because I remember, kind of, the coffee was still on, but we used to pick cotton, too, so.

FK: Did you also sell the cotton? Or was it only for futon?

TK: Yeah. The one that not flatten out, she used to make futon. She just spread it. But, later on, she used to take down to Ashikawas. They have a machine that flattens and comes into a sheet, huh? So, she used to go out and sell. Pack in a cotton packages, then sell out that way.

FK: Was anybody else doing cotton, too, in those days? Do you remember?

TK: Yeah, I kind of remember the Ashikawas had a big cotton land, too.

Then, they had kind of a cotton factory down there, no? So, I think, Ashikawa and who else had cotton? The cotton factory was only Ashikawas, I think.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

FK: Who else did you say?

TK: I think, Nakamura in Kamalumalu.

FK: Oh, had some cotton?

TK: Yeah.

FK: Did the Nishinas, too, do you recall?

TK: No, not Nishina, I don't think so. I think, Nakamura had a cotton machine.

FK: Do you remember how much the futon used to cost?

TK: Shee, I can't remember, now.

FK: Or about how much? They're so expensive today.

TK: Shee, I really don't know what it was.

FK: What kind of material did she usually cover it with?

TK: Cotton material. Those days, most of the things were all cotton--pure cotton.

FK: How about your coffee operations here? What was involved with that?

TK: Oh, the cherries?

FK: Uh huh, what did you do with your coffee?

TK: Well, we had a coffee pulping machine. So, we grind our own, and dry, and then sell it to American Factors.

FK: What kind of machine did you have? How was it operated?

TK: No, there was one motor. Yeah, run by motor.

FK: Oh, is that electric or was it . . .

TK: No, no. Not electric.

FK: Gas?

TK: Yeah, I think so.

FK: How many [drying] platforms did you have?

TK: Platform, we had one, two, three, I think. Three long platforms.

FK: How long did you have to dry your coffee outside?

TK: Well, maybe, that depends on the weather, too. Shee, that time, not good in coffee, no? I'm not sure.

FK: How about the water situation?

TK: Oh, only by tank.

FK: How many did you have?

TK: We had one large--the largest tank that the Kona [sugar] plantation had. When they close up the plantation, we bought the largest tank. And beside that, we had couple small ones. So, no matter how dry, [we] had drinking water, so we never did suffer with that. We used to give them drinking water when people ask for.

FK: Oh, people used to come during dry season?

TK: Yeah, yeah. Because, like washing, they will all go down to the ocean. Yeah, they all go down to the ocean, wash with the brackish water. But drinking, well, cannot drink those water, so my mother-in-law used to tell them to come and get it if, you know, having hard time with the water, you see? They always welcome to get the water. But we never did waste water, though. Not like nowdays. (Chuckles)

FK: How often did you wash clothes?

TK: Well, washing, we have every day with the children. All by the hand, though.

FK: Then, you had lots of water. Some people did once a week.

TK: Mm hmm.

FK: How about the cooking? You had such a large group of people here.

TK: Ho, that's the thing. I didn't like because I don't know how to cook, and (chuckles) then I have lots of workmen here, eh? Ah. . . . But lucky thing, we have store, so I used to open the can goods, and mix with the vegetables, and cook.

(Laughter)

FK: Oh, because it was just you and your father, before?

TK: I don't know how to cook. Even now, I don't (like) to cook.

(Laughter)

FK: So, you actually had to learn when you came here?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. Ah, really, yeah? Nobody teaches. My mother-in-law's busy in the store.

FK: She just left it to you?

(Laughter)

TK: Ah, I had hard time.

FK: Well, how about vegetables? Did you have it over here in the store? Did you grow your own?

TK: Vegetables, oh, let me see, no? Only like, cabbages, and not the kind fancy kind yasai [vegetables]. But those, I think, she was selling a little in the shop.

FK: Your workmen here, I've heard you and other people mention that there were different men who stayed here, before, and you folks used to take care of them. Who were some of these workmen that you had?

TK: Oh, you mean, the old folks?

FK: Uh huh, from before, that you remember?

TK: Yeah. There was one old man. But when he got old, then we found that he had a son in Lanai, so we took him to the son.

FK: What was his name?

TK: Imura, I think. Imura. One short, old man. He was a good drinker, though. Those days, my mother-in-law used to make beer in a barrel, eh? In a tall barrel, yeah? She used to make with hops. I think she was a good beer maker. Was clear and so nice, you know, the beer.

(Laughter)

TK: They call it "yama [mountain] beer." They used to call "yama beer."

FK: Was it to sell or just . . .

TK: No, no. You cannot sell. We cannot sell those. Just for the workmen. So, she used to make [it] way down, under the coffee platform, you know.

FK: Oh, under?

TK: Yeah, not in this house. Under the coffee platform. Evening, I used go with the old-fashioned pitcher jug, eh? I'll go down there, and (TK makes scooping motion) scoop one whole thing from the barrel, and then bring home. Serve the workmen.

FK: Where did your workmen sleep?

TK: Downstairs.

FK: This place is so big.

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. And then, we had upstairs, too, see? The whole upstairs open.

FK: Was it divided up into rooms?

TK: No, that was one big hall, just like. Yeah, was a big room.

FK: Like this level, right here, then, was how many rooms?

TK: Over here? The place where I made a restroom there, that was a bedroom, too. One, two, three. And over here, we had a shōji door. So, they could sleep over here, too.

FK: So, you had about six or seven rooms, right on this level?

TK: Yeah.

FK: Plus the store.

TK: That was all store. From this kitchen door, that side, were the papa's office, and that place was all straight open to the store.

FK: About 1930, you said you started lau hala. What got you started?

TK: Nineteen. . . . Let me see. . . . Thirty. Well, like in lau hala, the time I came here, my parents-in-law was exchanging with the hats with the goods, see? With the Hawaiians.

FK: Oh, they were doing it already?

TK: Yeah. They had that. . . . Hats, see?

FK: So, this is in the '20s, yet?

TK: So, then, with that hat, I used to--with the hand--I used to block

the hat in all different kinds of shape and I used to trim the hat. It used to sell good, those hats. All the kind regular working hats, you know.

FK: What do you mean, "block" the hat?

TK: I make into all different kind shapes, some. Lopsided shape; some, all equal shape; or, sometimes, I make the top just like the mushroom kind style; and all kind. I play around with that hat and then make into form. It's a funny thing. There are some people that likes to have something rare that you don't see other places. So, I used to sell lots of hats like that.

FK: So, from your parents-in-law's time, they were going around Kona. . . .

TK: To sell.

FK: To pick up the hats?

TK: No, no. Those days, the Hawaiians used to bring the hat. But, since the war [World War II] break out, then, I think, I took over the business.

FK: You were saying, before the war, you were driving around, too. You would barter and give them food?

TK: Yeah, yeah. Mm hmm. We used to deal with American Factors, so I used to go down to the Factors and pick up the groceries. Then, I'll take it up to the weaver, exchange . . .

FK: For hats?

TK: Because no money to pay them. So, exchange with the hat.

FK: What kind of hats were they?

TK: Just a regular working hat. But every person has all different hands, see? So, some have some nice handwork and the strips are finer. Then, I start to learn that. Oh, if I want to sell out, you know, one is so much, I have to give them all the same strip, so that everyone has the same strip of lau hala weave. So, I made lots of those; they call it the Hawaiian ko'i, the stripper. I made lots of the stripper and gave to each of the weaver. "From now on, you use this ko'i."

FK: For your hats?

TK: Yeah, for my hats, see? So that every one is in the same size for me to pack and sell. But good ones, I used to segregate on the side.

FK: So, you had some good ones?

TK: Yeah. So, before that, there were some rough-work one, fine one, all kinds. Since I gave them my stripper, then every one is all the same stripper. So, you don't see no junk ones, already. (Laughs) So, it's easier for me to take to the shop and sell those.

FK: Where did you take it?

TK: I used to take to Naalehu Plantation Store. And then, now, what's that? Not Honokaa. Next to Honokaa Town is. . . . What is that town? Not Laupahoehoe, no? Next one. From the plantation store, the train used to go to Hilo.

FK: Hakalau?

TK: Hakalau, yeah, Hakalau. Hakalau Plantation Store. If I take to the plantation store, they all pay me cash, eh?

FK: Like, how much was one hat, approximately?

TK: Mm. . . . You mean, I sell for? I think was only about 75 or 80 cents. Yeah.

FK: Who drove you?

TK: I used to go with my husband. He used to take me around.

FK: You also said you went all the way around to Naalehu?

TK: Yeah.

FK: Your weavers were from what parts of Kona?

TK: Hmm. From Kalaoa to Ke'ei. Once in a while, from Milolii. Milolii people, I didn't go down there. They used to come up. The whole group will come up together. Oh, and then bring up over hundred of hats, eh? So, it takes long time. When they reach here, it will be lunchtime already. So, I used to make lots of sandwich, and coffee, and cold drinks, and feed them.

FK: Oh, it's like a picnic for them, too, then?

TK: Yeah, so they seems to appreciate. And some ladies still remembers me. Yeah. "Oh, we used to go your place, yeah? And then, you used to serve us coffee and sandwich, yeah?"

(Laughter)

FK: Oh, must have been fun for them, too.

TK: Yeah. So, far away. Even now, it's far away. Those days, the road was (tsk) not a good road like now.

FK: Do you remember the names of some of your good weavers?

TK: Oh, you mean, the hat weaver? Yeah. Yeah, there were one lady. Alohikea Kahananui. (Pause) Shee, I forgot the name, no? There were lots. Lots of good weavers. Even in Honaunau side, they are still living, but they don't weave already, see? Good weaver.

FK: They all had their own trees or did you also provide them with the leaves, also?

TK: No, most of them had [trees], though. All on the back yard, they used to have their own.

FK: What did they used to exchange for?

TK: You mean, grocery? Well, mostly sugar, milk, sardines, corned beef.

FK: So, you were like a walking grocery store for them?

TK: Mm, mm hmm. Yeah.

FK: How often did you go around?

TK: Every Saturday. (Laughs)

FK: And how about to the plantation stores? When did you go to the stores?

TK: Plantation store? When I have the pile of hats. No, because not only them. I used to sell to Honolulu. You know, [across the street from] the old [Honolulu] Stadium, in front there is. . . . What is the name of the shop? [Hula Supply Center, Inc.]

FK: On the corner, there's a store?

TK: Yeah, yeah. That shop. Now the son has . . .

FK: Isenberg and [King Streets]?

TK: Now the son takes over. But Mr. Kop, the papa, used to deal with me. That, and then Musashiya.

FK: Did you have people do fancy hats, too?

TK: Yeah. Those days was good. Yeah. I used to have two-colors hats. All kinds. The good, red lau hala. I used to have all those.

FK: Did the fancy hats cost much more than the regular plantation hats?

TK: Oh, yeah. Mm hmm.

FK: Like, what was the difference in the cost?

TK: Oh, to retail? Oh, to retail the red, fine one, was pretty good. I think was $15, $20, I think.

FK: Oh, compared to less than a dollar?

TK: You mean, the other hats? The other hats that I used to sell, yeah, that's the wholesale price. But the good ones, I never did wholesale. All individual.

FK: What happened when the war broke out?

TK: Oh, when the war break out, everyone--Taro-san, Tojiro-san--everybody were going out to buy.

FK: Buy hats . . .

TK: But this was now not the hat but all the purses--handbags. All the soldiers, they were all over. Even in Hawaii, all over the place. That was the omiyage [present] for them to send back to their home. So, Honolulu, I don't know who was the buyer, but they start to gather and distribute all to the shops, eh? So, there were lots and lots of buyers, that time.

FK: Did you have any problems in Kona after the war broke out, because so many people were into lau hala?

TK: Well, no. . . .

FK: How was competition?

TK: It didn't matter too much to me because I still could get it.

FK: But did you notice more people?

TK: More people are buying, you mean?

FK: Both buying and making.

TK: Oh, yeah, making, yes. Everyone in the whole Kona were doing that time. Every home.

FK: Oh, not only Hawaiian homes?

TK: Oh, no. All Japanese.

FK: How about your home?

TK: My home? Sure. I made my two sons weave, too. They have to help me during the weekends to boil the green leaf to bleach into white, eh? Until they do that, they cannot have Sunday. (Laughs) So,

all his friends comes over. Well, those people could play because they don't have lau hala. But when they see Walter and Morris working on, they all will come and do exactly what they doing. They help and then finish up quick.

(Laughter)

TK: Yeah. Oh, they were nice, though. All nice boys, though.

FK: So, weekends, your boys had to help process---I mean, drying and boiling the lau hala?

TK: Yeah. We boiled and we have to dry. And after that, we have to roll. Each one, we have to roll and put on the platform. They used to come and help. And then, the next morning--see, if we cook 'em Saturday--next morning, Sunday. Sunday, we have to unroll that, and make it straight, and put it all on the platforms. They will help. All, they will help. Ah, it was nice.

FK: Then they were allowed to go out and play?

TK: Yeah. Yeah, they were nice boys.

FK: What about weaving? When did your boys have to weave?

TK: Oh, when I don't boil the lau hala.

FK: What did they make?

TK: All purses.

FK: What kind?

TK: That time, I used to let him make aloha purse. You weave and you put the word "aloha." You weave together and make. After you weave all, the word will come out, see?

FK: How big were purses and what kind?

TK: Was about four by ten [inches]. I don't think they can weave now, though.

FK: (Laughs) How did these purses come into being so popular? Before, it was more for hats, huh?

TK: As soon as the war break out, I think.

FK: Who started this. . . .

TK: There were one person from Honolulu. He used to come around to Kona and ask the people to make this kind of thing, or dinner mats, or something like that. So, from that, it started, I think.

FK: Did your children have to help on the farm?

TK: Oh, yeah. Coffee land, yeah. Mm hmm. They all help.

FK: Because I remember some of your children mentioning how strict their grandmother was.

TK: (Laughs) Ah, yeah. Those days, I think, every family, all the children will go out.

FK: Did they work from early in the morning, too?

TK: Oh, yeah. After the coffee is picked, then we bring it home. Then, dark. Then, everybody puts the lantern and start to grind the coffee.

FK: Nighttime?

TK: Yeah. Then, in the morning, before they go to school, they'll wake up and wash the coffee, and then spread it . . .

FK: How did they wash it?

TK: This big--like a tub--square tub. We soak that [coffee] overnight in the water. And early in the morning, the boys will go step on that thing.

FK: Oh, with their feet?

TK: Yeah. And then, they wash it. Then, you strain 'em. And then, they pour on top. There is a net underneath, see, where they put all the coffee. And from there, they pull with the kind of rake thing all out on the platform.

FK: How many children did you have then?

TK: When I first became Kimura, the youngest boy was three years.

FK: Oh, the youngest Kimura boy?

TK: Mm [yes].

FK: Oh, so you had to care for him?

TK: Yeah. So, he was just like our children.

(Laughter)

TK: Mama was busy in the store, so, no? So, that boy. And when Morris was going to Konawaena, so, I think. . . . I don't know whether the youngest was still here. I don't think so.

FK: You had seven children, and one was born during the war?

TK: The last two. Karen. Karen was born on blackout night. So, that's the only child I went to hospital.

FK: Oh, your other . . .

TK: The rest are all midwife, at home.

FK: And who were your midwives?

TK: Midwife, Mrs. Ashikawa.

FK: You were mentioning, was it Alfrieda? When Alfrieda was born?

TK: Alfrieda was born here.

FK: Something was happening here?

TK: Oh, Morris? Because they are one year apart, see? Frieda was the first granddaughter grandchild for them. So, they made a good birthday party for her. Then, we were making mochi. I was rolling mochi, and all of a sudden, I got stomachache. I went up to the (chuckles) room. Then, I call my mother-in-law. Then, while everybody's making mochi, I gave birth already.

(Laughter)

FK: You make it sound so easy.

TK: Yeah, I'm thankful, though. The suffering was just a short time, yeah?

FK: When your children were sick or family was sick, like that, what did you use for medicine?

TK: Oh, there was Dr. Hayashi--the papa--was living. So, I used to take to him right away.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: Mrs. Kimura, do you remember how the war affected people in Kona in your life? Maybe you have some experiences you'd like to relate.

TK: Mm. . . . Those days, yeah? Even North and South Kona people couldn't get together too easily. I think one has to have a permit to go to South Kona or to North Kona. Then, those days, we didn't have a airport down here in Kailua. Once, I remember that I have to take my husband to Honolulu to a doctor. (Mr. Nishihara, who worked at Kona Inn, told me to ask his boss), Mr. Cherry,who was the manager of the Kona Inn, those days. So, I asked Mr. Cherry to help me out about the plane. So, he helped me and got me the plane

ticket from Hilo. So, it was good. So, with his kindness, we went. But those days, even a airport, they will check on you. Oh, [if] you had a scar here or scar here, no?

FK: The military?

TK: Yeah. They will mark down everything and look at you. Oh, I was kind of (tsk) a little frightened, though. I was thinking, "What they (chuckles) going to do?"

FK: How did you get to Hilo?

TK: Oh, to Hilo, well, we drive over. I don't know why, but Mr. Cherry helped me out, and then we went out.

FK: What was Honolulu like to you as compared to Kona?

TK: Oh, you mean, those days? I don't know. Like in Honolulu, I don't go around much, so.

FK: I mean, what kind of impression did you get of Honolulu when you compare with Kona?

TK: Compare with Kona? No, I don't recall anything in Honolulu.

FK: Just bigger?

TK: Oh, you mean, the places? Oh, yeah. The place a big town.

FK: How about food in Kona or your store, as far as goods were concerned, during the war? Were you able to get everything you needed?

TK: No, the rice was shortage.

FK: Anything else besides that?

TK: So, those days, all the schoolchildren used to plant sweet potato.

FK: You mean, to take the place of rice?

TK: Yeah. But so far, I think, wasn't that bad.

FK: How many donkeys did you have here?

TK: Oh, over here? Hmm, let me see. I think, he had about three donkeys.

FK: Where did you keep them?

TK: They all tied around here. Not special farm, or barn, or something (laughs) like that.

FK: You were mentioning what the situation was with lau hala in Kona, about people planting trees and the shortage of leaves before?

TK: Oh, when the war break out and then the lau hala were in boom, that's the time everybody cut lots of the coffee trees and then planted lau hala trees. Until the price of the coffee came up, then the lau hala tree went down. Because if they don't weave and they don't use, that's a nuisance, eh? The rats will just gather in the lau hala tree. So, they all chop down. Now, I think, there's a shortage of lau hala leaves.

FK: In those days, if you were short of lau hala, where did you get it from?

TK: You mean, the weavers? Oh, we used to get lots from Keaukaha. Brown lau hala and the green leaves. Mr. Matsuyama used to bring from there every weekend.

FK: How did he come? In a. . . .

TK: Yeah, he used to have a big truck. And then, he loads and he buys from Keaukaha, I think. Those people will all bundle up, 100 bundle.

FK: Of 100 leaves?

TK: Yeah, 100 leaves in one bundle. Then, all the weavers will buy that and bleach that. But now I don't think they have any lau hala back there, too. All the land is sold. Condominium coming up, I think. That's why no lau hala leaves. I also used to gather all the natural one from Kohala.

FK: Who was that from?

TK: I had one Japanese lady who used to collect for me. She also will bundle up all into 100s and pack it in her--I don't know--garage or something. Then, when she had busload of that thing all ready, then my husband and I used to go and get. Then, we used to sell that to the weavers. In Keaukaha side, it's mostly dark lau hala. Brown lau hala. But Kohala is natural.

FK: Is there a reason for that?

TK: You mean, why we have to have that? Like, in brown, it goes with brown and white. We call it "two tone" or either all brown. But people like to have natural. You have to get the natural lau hala--tan color.

FK: So, you sold also mats and other kinds of . . .

TK: Yeah. Those days was all right. Mats or anything you could get.

FK: What kind of things did you make or had made by the weavers to sell?

TK: From the weavers? The thing that is left now is those purses. That were the most. . . .

FK: Popular?

TK: Popular ones that was going out all to Honolulu. Beside that, I used to get those dinner mats. Napkin holder, napkin rings, cigarette case, or coin purse, fan.

Hawaiians will make those cushion cover. They stuff in those. . . . Hawaiians are clever, though. They strip the lau hala and then the scrap ones, they can throw it out. But some of the scraps are all left behind. They will stuff that into--just like stuffing with the cotton, eh? That's good, you know. Good.

FK: In the cushion?

TK: Yeah, in the cushion. Even their pūne'es, they stuff with that. And then, once a year, they will just take it outside. Then, some are all crumpled, just like powdered already. Then, they will take only the good ones back again and then add the new one in again. Yeah, clever. They don't have to use cotton.

(Laughter)

FK: Did you send your children to Japanese school?

TK: Frieda and Morris. They, somehow, went up till around, I don't know whether Frieda graduated. She was all right. But when Walter was about third [grade], then the war [World War II] break out, so for that one, no Japanese school.

FK: How about recreation? Did you folks do anything as a family?

TK: At home?

FK: Or go out somewhere to community events, or beach, or anything like that?

TK: Get-together, you mean? (Pause) During the war, yeah?

FK: Or before or after. During the '30s, like that. Like you used to do at Japanese school, go with your father.

TK: Well, Japanese school, the graduation time was a big day for everybody.

FK: Oh, so even though you had store . . .

TK: Yeah, we all used to go. Those days, they will even serve you lunch. Whole day event, yeah?

FK: When did you close your store during the year?

TK: During the year? Shee, look like open all the time.

(Laughter)

FK: At shōgatsu [New Year's]?

TK: Yeah, maybe at shōgatsu. That's the only time, I think, closed.

FK: How many days?

TK: Mm. . . . I don't remember.

FK: Oh, how did you folks celebrate your New Year over here?

TK: When? You mean, when the old folks were here? Nothing special. Only the papa used to go out to shinnen [exchange New Year greetings with] all to his friend.

FK: How about food, like that?

TK: Those days, not much like nowdays. They will just. . . .

FK: Did you do cooking, like that, for New Year's?

TK: Nah, not specially.

FK: Oh, your family didn't do that?

TK: Not like now. Although you have, though, all the shōgatsu no foods, yeah? You have everything around that time. From kazunoko to whatever. And then, like us, it's a store and then you have everything in the store, so even people come, so easy. (Laughs) Just grab things from the store, and bring out, and open. You can do anything.

FK: What about mochi?

TK: Yeah, mochi, we used to pound. So, Morris and Walter used to pound and help. Then, Walter (jokingly) said, "Obaban, mochi sukan no de, tsukinanna ima kara. [Grandma, I don't like mochi, so don't pound any more.]

(Laughter)

TK: Ah, he used to like, though, Walter. He used to like mochi. But just give the hint to the old folks, they don't say that they are tired of pounding. (Laughs)

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: How about your church? The Odai-san?

TK: The Kamalumalu Odai-san, located above Kurashige's? Yeah, I think, since the reverend were interned and no reverend there, the shinja wanted to sell the place. Just then, my fatherin-law was in Japan. So, when he came back, one of the men (Mr. David Ota) came to talk to him about that. So, he said, oh, if that's the case, he would like to leave the church as it is, and then he will pay the yearly rental. So, to leave as it is. But already, people who wanted to buy the place was already set to buy, so it was too far gone already. So, he couldn't help any. Then, one who wanted to buy the land bought the place. One wanted to buy the building, they bought the building. But nobody will [buy] the. . . .

FK: Altar?

TK: Yeah, altar, Buddha. So, my father-in-law say, well, if that's the case, he wants that.

FK: So, it came here?

TK: So, we mukaeru [received] that Odai-san over here, and it's still with us.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 9-43-3-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Tsuruyo Kimura (TK)

January 8, 1981

Holualoa, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Faye Komagata (FK)

FK: This is an interview with Mrs. Tsuruyo Kimura at her home in Holualoa. Today's date is January 8, 1981.

Mrs. Kimura, last time, when we ended, we were talking about the butsudan at the Odaishi-san.

TK: The Odai-san.

FK: What happened to that after everything else was sold?

TK: Then, my father-in-law told them that since no one is taking the Odai-san, he wants to have Odai-san.

FK: Altar?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. So, he brought it back to my home, and it's still here.

FK: Oh, that's why everything's so big in there?

(Laughter)

FK: Did you ever hold services or meetings here?

TK: Yes, once in a while, I do that.

FK: And how about the services? Who would conduct the service?

TK: Well, the Odai-san sensei comes over.

FK: Oh, I see. You had coffee land and cotton, before?

TK: We used to.

FK: About when did you give it up?

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TK: Oh, you mean, the coffee land?

FK: Coffee land.

TK: I think was around, yeah, early '60s, yeah?

FK: Then, the cotton was much . . .

TK: Yeah, much earlier.

FK: Oh, okay. In your store, up here, did you ever have trouble with thefts or people coming in and stealing?

TK: No, so far, I don't remember. No theft.

FK: But this is a pretty big store, though. I mean, it's a pretty good-sized store.

TK: Yeah, but those days, not like these days.

FK: How do you mean?

TK: Well, everybody used to just open their doors, not only stores, you know, without locking, and they can go around. But not these days, eh? So, same thing with the store. I don't remember any thief coming in, though.

FK: You mentioned people used to even announce themselves when they came into the store?

TK: Oh, yeah. When they come into the store, not like (chuckles) these days. They'll at least say "hello" or "Is someone in?" So, you can tell someone is in the store. But nowdays, no.

FK: Walk in and walk out again. (Laughs)

TK: Yeah. Nowdays, people won't say even "hello" or anything. They'll just walk in, (laughs) so. . . . The time is different, yeah?

FK: You also mentioned you had many accidents out front here? You had a junction right here?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. Those days, the road (intersection) was much more further to our store side, see? Now, the intersection is way over, yeah?

FK: It's higher, you mean?

TK: No, it's wider to the curb, see? But before, the curb was right in front of our (chuckles) store. So, some people, they miscue to

turn fast, then they would just drive into my store.

(Laughter)

FK: This happened like even before the war, too? Or mostly after?

TK: Mm. . . . Yeah, around after, I think, no? Was it after?

FK: Did you have more than one accident here, though?

TK: Yeah. About two, three.

FK: That's a big job to replace your window there.

TK: Windows and post. So, now, we put the wall in the front, eh? (Laughs)

FK: Oh, with the plants inside?

TK: Yeah. Before, we didn't have that, see?

FK: Was just open [area]?

TK: Just the post. So, if (chuckles) they knock onto the post, the post goes onto the show window, see? But, lately, no trouble of that.

FK: How about your children's clothing? Did you have to buy it or did you make it?

TK: Well, we were general store, and we used to sell material. So, I sew all the children's clothes.

FK: What kind of materials did you use?

TK: Well, for boys, there's denim, khaki. And then, girls, we used to have lots of cotton materials.

FK: Did the girls have dresses, too, or did they wear pants?

TK: No, they all wear dresses. No pants those days. Girls wear (chuckles) all dresses.

FK: You mean, to school, too?

TK: Yeah.

FK: How about shoes?

TK: Shoes, no. They barefoot. They were barefooted.

FK: How about in the coffee land? Did they wear shoes there?

TK: No.

FK: They were tough!

TK: Yeah, that's right, though. Only, I don't know, later on, then they start to have Japanese tabi [Japanese socks], yeah?

FK: You mean, to wear in the coffee land?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. You wear tabi and go in.

FK: About when was that? Do you know?

TK: Well, that's when Frieda folks were small.

FK: So, it's before the war [World War II], then?

TK: Then, that's before the war, no?

FK: How about the style of the boys' and girls' clothes?

TK: Style, I used to look the order books, and then. . . .

(Laughter)

FK: Oh, you copied?

TK: Yeah.

(Laughter)

FK: That meant you drafted your own pattern?

TK: Yeah. I didn't go to sewing school that time, but, you know, more or less, just by. . . . Then, after I got Morris and Ella, I think, for about a month I went to Mrs. Igeta's place to learn how to draft the dress. That's all. But nowdays, it's all right. You get all commercial pattern. Even you don't have to go to sewing school. (Chuckles)

FK: Did most of the other families around here use the same kind of material, too?

TK: Oh, yes. Everybody was about the same.

FK: Nothing like today with all different kinds of fabrics?

TK: No.

FK: Did you have a lot of different kinds of printed fabrics, too?

TK: Oh, yes. Mm hmm.

FK: Where were they from, mostly?

TK: Well, salesmen used to come from Honolulu. And then, they used to have in Hilo--[Theo H.] Davies and American Factors. They used to come.

FK: Last time, we also talked about your lau hala business. Do you remember about when you started to buy from non-Hawaiians? Before, you said, your weavers were Hawaiians, eh?

TK: You mean, around what year?

FK: About when, yeah. Before the war? After the war?

TK: Let me see. I used to take Ella and Clinton on the bus, and take them around together to collect all the hats.

FK: So, that was about. . . .

TK: Just around the wartime, I think. Until then, you know, we didn't have much weaver in making square baskets. Few Japanese women used to make with those hat weaving, purses, fine weave. I used to have that, but now you see lots of square baskets. That was during the wartime, though. Then, even Filipino men used to weave for me.

FK: Oh, men?

TK: Yeah. Filipino men used to weave for me. Oh, Filipinos has the perfect hand. Nice weaving.

FK: They were mostly in baskets, then?

TK: Yeah.

FK: Baskets for what? You mean, like coffee baskets?

TK: Filipinos, I don't see any women weaving, but even now, I have some Filipino men making some hats. All the men does.

FK: What were the baskets for?

TK: It's for--to complete into handbag.

FK: Oh, I see. How did they learn to weave, though? The Japanese and the Filipinos?

TK: I think, they must learn from each other. And I think Mrs. Ako taught them.

FK: So, all of a sudden, like you said, during the war, everybody started to . . .

TK: Oh, yes.

FK: So, I was wondering how everyone learned.

TK: I think, some Japanese ladies know how to weave a coffee basket. The method of making those square baskets same thing with coffee basket. Like waste basket or coffee basket. It's the same idea. So, I think, from that on, they make the block and weave onto the block.

FK: As far as the trim, then, what kind of material was used?

TK: Trim, what? Lau hala?

FK: Yeah. Was it only lau hala? For decoration?

TK: Yeah. We used to mix with the brown. But that's also a brown lau hala.

FK: As far as coffee baskets was concerned, who made and sold them? Because you were talking mostly about fancy baskets or purses, like that.

TK: Coffee baskets? Yeah, there were lots of . . .

FK: You made that, too?

TK: I used to have a man weaving the coffee baskets.

FK: I notice there are other kinds of coffee baskets besides lau hala?

TK: Oh, bamboo? Those are [made by] Filipinos, yeah?

FK: Did you sell those, too?

TK: No, I don't think I did have. Only for family use.

FK: Was that made here?

TK: Yeah. A Filipino makes over here.

FK: The bamboo?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. He goes and get the bamboo. So, I thought I'll order from Japan. I thought Japan is a bamboo country, so I asked one salesman, "Try and write to Japan and have this coffee basket made." But what they made. . . . Maybe they thought coffee was a leaf, too, just like picking tea in Japan, eh? So, they made a fine weave--soft ones--for coffee baskets. So, I said, "No, no. That, I cannot." So, since I ordered, they sent a sample. So, I said, "Well, whatever they sent, okay. I have to take it." I took, but they couldn't use for coffee picking, no.

FK: About how much were coffee baskets, say, in the '30s or '40s? Now, they're very expensive.

(Laughter)

TK: Those days, was only about 75 cents, I (laughs) think.

FK: And how much are you selling it for now?

TK: Now? Now, you gotta sell for about ten . . .

FK: Dollars?

TK: . . . ten. Depends on the size.

FK: And it's the same kind of lau hala?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. The same lau hala.

FK: Who else made and sold hats in Kona, besides you, before the war?

TK: You mean, the hats? You mean, who was selling?

FK: Yeah. You were buying, huh?

TK: Yeah. But [a] few other stores used to collect, because the Hawaiians used to change with the grocery. So, all the stores will take the hat.

FK: Was there anybody doing a big, main outlet like you were?

TK: No, that, I don't know. I think Machado is quite long, though.

FK: That's way the other side, though? South Kona.

TK: Yeah, in Captain Cook.

FK: The Japanese school, in the past, had some PTAs [Parent-Teacher Association]. How about the Holualoa Japanese School?

TK: Yeah, I think they must have. They did have, I think.

FK: Did you participate?

TK: I don't know. I never did go, I think. Maybe once or twice.

(Laughter)

FK: How was the lau hala business in the '50s? After the war?

TK: After the war? Lau hala was all right.

FK: Oh, it was still okay?

TK: It's still okay and it is still good, yet. Now, especially. Everyone is asking for lau hala things. Now, I cannot get it. No weavers now. (Chuckles) Very scarce, yeah?

FK: How about your general store? How long did you keep it up?

TK: General store? I think, [until] right after Taniguchi's came in.

FK: To Kailua? You closed it [TK's store], you mean?

TK: Yeah. Then, I think, I went down Kailua, see?

FK: Oh, so this general store was pretty long, then? Until about 1960?

TK: Yeah. Wartime, we still had.

FK: So, what made you close the store and go down to Kailua? This was in 1960 you went down, yeah, to Kailua?

TK: Mm. Well, that time, I thought--the Kuakini Road came between, see? Then, I thought this road is outcast already. Hardly anybody will pass. So, I told Morris, "Oh, I think I'll rent one of the space down Kona Inn. And then, I want to see."

So, Morris told me, "Do you think you can make?"

I said, "That's all right. Once in my lifetime, let me gamble and see" (laughs).

So, Morris and I went down and then talk with the manager. Then, the place was open, so I borrowed the place. Rented, yeah? So, I had to close up here. Up here was just like a warehouse. Whatever I order, I cannot put everything down there because it's a small space down there.

FK: At Kona Inn?

TK: Yeah. So, I used to leave the things up here and then take it down whenever the shop open.

FK: You just closed the general store, then, here?

TK: Yeah, I closed.

FK: What about your in-laws?

TK: No, they were here, yet. But they used to work on the garden or in the coffee . . .

FK: They retired, then?

TK: . . . yeah, coffee land.

FK: What made you decide only on lau hala, though?

TK: Oh, down there? Well, lau hala was the only thing, eh? People will like, too.

FK: And you enjoyed?

TK: I do. I still do.

FK: And how was business down at Kona Inn, then?

TK: Those days were kind of slow, but I could just keep up. Although now is better, yeah? Now, I wish if I have all those weavers. . . .

FK: Oh, that you had before?

TK: (Chuckles)

FK: What was Kona Inn like in 1960, around there? It's changed, now.

TK: Yeah, now it's changed. But, oh, was good, those days.

FK: What was there at the time when you were. . . .

TK: Kona Inn? Kona Inn were just exactly the same. That's a hotel for the tourists to be there. And tourists used to love that Kona Inn because it was so convenient for them.

FK: There are a lot of new shops in front now.

TK: Oh, now, it's entirely different.

FK: Were you one of the few shops down there, then?

TK: But now, it's all changed. There's no shop over there already.

FK: Oh, where you were, you mean?

TK: Yeah. I don't think so.

FK: You were renting it directly from Kona Inn?

TK: Kona Inn. Yeah.

FK: And who was the . . .

TK: Boss? The first boss. . . . Shee, I forgot his name.

(Laughter)

TK: When the time when I got out from there, that was Mr. Milke. He was a very nice manager.

FK: And how long were you down there?

TK: I stayed there ten years.

FK: You closed when?

TK: You mean, closed the shop? No, they asked me, when they renovate that place, you know. They made another building on the side of mine where there was a tennis court, before. They took off the tennis court and built a building there. Up and down--two stories. They asked me to move in the second story. So, I told them, "No, I don't want any second story. Go up and down, and then I don't think any elderly woman will go up and down the stairs." So, I just moved back to my home and stayed until the World Square open. I asked them to keep one of the space. So, as soon as they finished the space, they call me. So, I went down again.

FK: Oh, World Square?

TK: Yeah. So, I went to the World Square and stayed there for five years.

FK: How was business there, then?

TK: Well, that was a little in from the main highway. Until the people know [about it], it was kind of slow, yeah? But after that, people start to know where I was. Then they all start to come in. Even now, they'll go over there--people who knew that I was there--and they'll ask where I am [now], see? So, those ladies will all tell them to come up here.

FK: So, you closed there in 1975?

TK: Was it '75? Yeah, I think around there.

FK: What made you come back up here?

TK: My lease expire. Five years. I didn't care to stay five years. I told 'em three years, but Walter says, "No, Mom. Three years is too short. It comes so fast." Yeah, but I'm going come to my age, so I didn't like too much.

But he told me, so I said, "Okay, then. Make it five years."

Then, when I left there, Mr. Ron Brown, he took over the place. He told me, "No, Mrs. Kimura, I think you have another year more."

I said, "No (chuckles), I don't think so."

(Laughter)

TK: Well, I was happy to come back. So, I came home and opened here.

FK: You didn't think of retiring? You just opened here?

TK: Well, kind of half retire.

(Laughter)

TK: I do what I want.

(Laughter)

TK: So, people always calls me before they come. I tell to my customers, "Now, be sure to call me before (laughs) you come, because sometimes, I'm out." Sometimes I'm out collecting lau hala, go to the post office to mail the things. That hour, I'm closed, so.

FK: Right now, what kind of goods do you stock?

TK: Now, I have only straw items. I don't carry any other things. Mostly straw items.

FK: Did you have other things before?

TK: Well, I used to keep small things, like jewelry things, but I don't care for those now. I go only for straw items.

FK: How much of your lau hala is from Kona?

TK: You mean the things? What I could get? Now? Very few, yeah? Like, in handbags, yeah. [If] I have a steady weaver, it's all right. And the hats, yeah. But just enough for the customers that gives me the order. I'd like to leave lots in the shop, but that much (is all I have), see? I don't have the weavers. So, just enough for the weavers.

FK: You seem to have people from all over, though, not only this island, who order from you.

TK: Oh, yes. From Honolulu, Kauai, Maui. All the other islands.

FK: Can't they find it there, either?

TK: I don't think so.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: What was that, now? On the shells?

TK: I don't know what you call that shell. A nice shell. All the

Hawaiians used to go down to the beach and bring home. And they don't know what to do, too. So, they used to call me, and then I'll go and get those. Then, I like to use in my lau hala, yeah? I'll make into hatband or . . .

FK: Oh, is this the shells?

TK: Mm. So, you have to take the meat out.

FK: Oh, they're alive?

TK: You cannot, see? It's nicely closed, so we used to bury in the dirt. I think that also, ant eats up. But now you cannot get that kind shell. I don't think you . . .

FK: What color is that?

TK: Those nice, shiny, (dark brown with freckles). Now, it's all private beach, so you cannot get. Those days, Hawaiians used to go and get even the salt down there.

FK: Down which one?

TK: They used to go down Honokohau Beach, I think. Yeah, those days, there were lots of shells, though. I like to try everything. So, I use the shell. I want to bring home. "Shee, I think this good for the hatband." But that, you have to glue. You put the string between the hole and then put the glue on the top.

FK: You drill a hole yourself?

TK: No, that you cannot drill, the shell. It has the opening on the back, see? So, I used to put the string in there. Then, put the glue on the top, so the string holds that. Then make a hatband. It was a nice hatband.

FK: You mentioned your macadamia nuts. You drilled holes in the nuts?

TK: Yeah, that can be a nice hatband, too. And also, you can sell as a neck lei.

FK: And you used it as handles, also?

TK: Yeah, puller. Zipper puller. I braid the raffia, and then at the end, I'll put that, just for fancy.

FK: But you have to get the meat out of the nuts?

TK: Oh, yes. If not, the rat going chew.

(Laughter)

FK: So, where do you leave the nuts, then, to get the meat out?

TK: Well, I just stack in the box and put 'em outside.

FK: And then?

TK: And then, the ants will eat up. Good worker.

(Laughter)

FK: You don't have to pay for labor.

(Laughter)

TK: That's the only way, yeah? You cannot be digging the meat with your hand.

FK: In 1948, you said Stewart was born?

TK: Was it 1948?

FK: Uh huh. Can you talk about the circumstances of how he came to your family?

TK: Oh, that is my brother-in-law's son. She gave birth and just . . .

FK: This was your sister-in-law?

TK: Yeah, my sister-in-law. She gave birth in Hilo. Then, one week later, she came back home. Then, I think, she had a blood clot. So, my brother-in-law went to call the doctor, but when the doctor came, she was gone already. The eldest daughter was just going to graduate that year from Hilo High School. Albert's daughter. The first daughter.

FK: Oh, Albert is the father?

TK: Yeah, Albert is the father of Stewart. My husband's elder brother.

So, I told Lucille. I say, "Well, you still have to finish your school, and nobody will be taking care of Stewart." So, I say, "How about Auntie taking back with me, and I'll keep the child?" So, they were happy. So, that night, after the funeral, I carried the child, and we came home. Ever since then, he's my son.

(Laughter)

FK: So, he was raised together with the rest of your family?

TK: Yeah. Mm hmm. So, he thinks all my children are his sisters and brothers.

FK: Well, he has relatives in Kona, too?

TK: You mean, Stewart? Yeah, Dr. Hayashi. It was Dr. Hayashi's sister [who was Stewart's mother]. So, Dr. Hayashi, Lillian Towata, the other aunties and uncles.

FK: Your other children, were they able to go to college?

TK: Yeah, so far.

FK: How about their financial situation, though?

TK: Well, sometimes, I have to borrow from credit union. Frieda help a lot. And then, part-time, they have to work on their own.

FK: Can you tell me what some of them are doing now, then?

TK: My daughter Alfrieda is. . . . When Hawaiian Airlines started down in Kailua, before that, they had the office in Mr. Jyo's store in Kealakekua. She was working there. She goes to the office there. Then, I don't know, couple years later I think, the Kona airport opened. So, she start to go down to the Kona airport.

FK: This is the old airport?

TK: Yeah, the old airport. So, she's still working at the . . .

FK: The Hawaiian Airlines?

TK: Mm hmm [yes], Keahole [airport].

FK: That's why people say she's one of the longest workers?

TK: Yeah, I think she is. She's the oldest one in there working, yeah?

FK: And the next one . . .

TK: Then, one is Morris. Yeah, Morris went to University. The year that he was going to graduate, then he was drafted.

FK: Oh, so World War II?

TK: So, he was in the army. He served in the army. After he came back, he went for his master's in Iowa. And now, he's at the Konawaena High School. Principal, now. Then, the next one is Walter. Walter went to University of Hawaii, also. Then, he also served in the army. After he came back. . . . Yeah, then he start to teach at Konawaena School. Now, he's principal at Honaunau School. Then, the next is Ella.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: Where did Ella go to school?

TK: Ella is the one that went to Michigan. Then, next is . . .

FK: And she's teaching at Holualoa School?

TK: Yeah, Holualoa School. Then, next will be my son Clinton. Right after he graduate Konawaena, he volunteer in the army and he went to the service. Then, after he came back, I told him to continue school, but he didn't care to. That time, Morris and Walter were working already. So, they said they want to help him to go back to school, but he didn't care to. Then, he went up to Chicago. He say he wants to go up and work up there. He went up there. Then, later on, he moved down to LA [Los Angeles] where he is now. His job is landscaping now.

Then the next is my third daughter, Karen. She graduated from the Indiana college. She's teaching in Aiea school now. Then comes Stewart. He also graduated from the University of Hawaii. And then, he used to play music (laughs) in Shipwreck Kelly's for couple years.

(Laughter)

TK: Then, he's up in LA now--in the accounting office.

FK: How many grandchildren do you have?

TK: I have sixteen.

FK: How many of your children are living in Kona?

TK: Living in Kona right now? Four.

FK: That's pretty good.

TK: Yeah, I'm fortunate to have the children near me. (Chuckles)

FK: So many have left. And going way back, there was something I forgot to ask. When you were about the sixth or seventh grade, your father went to Honolulu to work. Would you mind talking about that a little? Describing how that came about and what happened to you?

TK: Oh, my father? When he went to Honolulu to work, he asked Dr. Kasahara and Miss Kasahara to take care of me. So, it was just like a dormitory, because there were about three more other girls there. So, I stayed there, go to school from there. I don't know how long I stayed there. Those days, I think the Japanese school teachers has to go to Honolulu to take a test.

FK: Oh, that was Miss Kasahara?

TK: Yeah. So I once went with her to Honolulu. That's the time I met my father. Then, after that, I think about a year later, my father came back.

FK: What was your father doing?

TK: You mean, in Honolulu? Shee, I don't know. Labor in plantation, I think.

FK: When you were with the Kasaharas, was there anybody else there?

TK: Yeah, there were, I think, three more other girls there. They were Miss Nakahara, Miss Ushijima . . .

FK: That's Fumi Ushijima?

TK: Yeah, and Miss Watanabe. Those three, I remember.

FK: Why were they there?

TK: Shee, I don't know. Like Nakahara used to stay in Holualoa, I think. And in those days. . . . No, those days, did we have Konawaena High School?

FK: Oh, were they older than you?

TK: Yeah. Nakahara was older. Like Fumi-san and Miss Watanabe, I think, a little younger than I.

FK: How about your meals there? How did you folks live?

TK: You mean, at Kasahara's? Oh, they used to do the cooking.

FK: Did you have to help, too?

TK: We used to help in [doing] dishes.

FK: How was this paid for?

TK: Shee, I don't know about that, but they must. I think papa was paying for that, I think.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

FK: You mentioned that Miss Kasahara was a Japanese school teacher?

TK: Yeah. Those days, yeah, she was.

FK: That's Mrs. Kato, today, right? Kikue Kato?

TK: Yeah, that's right.

FK: What was her father doing?

TK: Oh, he was a doctor.

FK: What kind?

TK: I don't know what kind special, but he was a doctor, though.

FK: Everybody called him Dr. Kasahara?

TK: Yeah, Dr. Kasahara.

FK: What kind of house was that? Do you remember?

TK: I don't know whether it's same, but. . . . No, I think they have changed, yeah? The house that the Yates used to live. I don't know who lives there now.

FK: In Kealakekua?

TK: Yeah. Right near, in front of Nakamura's.

FK: [It's no longer there.]

TK: Oh, is that right? Oh, I didn't know. That old house. It was a big house, though, when we stayed there.

FK: The foundation is still there, though.

TK: Oh, yeah?

FK: Then, they rented it from Yates?

TK: Shee, that, I don't know.

FK: That's all Yates property over there?

TK: Must be, no?

FK: Did you have a room to yourself or did you have to share?

TK: Yeah. We used to have one big room, and all the girls will sleep on the bed.

FK: Bed?

TK: Mm hmm. I wonder if that building was like a hospital before? To think about it, yeah? We had room. Pretty big house, that was.

FK: They had a kitchen?

TK: Yeah, the kitchen. Kitchen was a wide, big kitchen. And they had another dining room. Then, Dr. Kasahara's office. So, I was just wondering, as you said, bed. You know, in those days, nobody has bed. They all sleep on the floor.

FK: Must have been a new experience.

TK: Yeah. We did have bed over there.

FK: How about school vacation time?

TK: School vacation, all the girls used to go back to their home.

FK: But you had to stay?

TK: Yeah. Like me, I have no place to go, stay there. So, one vacation, they took me out Honolulu when the teachers have to take their exam, yeah?

FK: You went by boat, of course?

TK: Oh, boat. Hoo, I didn't like that. I used to get sick.

(Laughter)

FK: Was it for passengers, too, though?

TK: You mean, the boat? Well, that time, on the deck, I think. I know when we first came to Hawaii, we were on the deck. My father had a red blanket. When the waves came in, we were wet. Then, I'm so sick and I don't want to move. All my clothes got stain in red. (Laughs)

FK: Oh, from the blanket?

TK: I remember that.

(Laughter)

TK: But when Miss Kasahara took me to Honolulu, I remember going to Kawaihae and catch the boat from there. We caught the boat from there and went down, I think.

FK: How did you get to Kawaihae?

TK: We rode on a car and we went. I remember I had one hat on. Waimea to Kawaihae, going down the trail, my hat flew out. (Laughs) Then, it start to roll and roll.

(Laughter)

TK: So, they have to stop and pick it up. (Laughs) Yeah, that time, we went out from Kawaihae.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: Around this area here, when you first came to live, were there many Japanese or were there other ethnic groups here?

TK: Yeah, there were quite lots of Japanese. But there were a Portuguese family living across from the store. And there were another Portuguese family, too, but when I came here, they already left over here. So, one of the Japanese family moved in there. Quite many Japanese, too. All on this Hualalai Road, now, eh? There were lots of Japanese people.

FK: That was because of the [sugar] plantation or were they coffee farmers?

TK: No, when I came, I think, the plantation was gone already.

FK: Your customers here at the store, were there lots of Portuguese or. . . .

TK: Portuguese, Hawaiians. But Japanese were more, though.

FK: How did your in-laws communicate with them?

TK: I give credit to my mother-in-law. She used to count the money in Hawaiian and Portuguese (chuckles). I couldn't remember, but she was all right.

FK: So, your in-laws were able to kind of communicate, then?

TK: Uh huh [yes]. Just like a baby talk, I think, now. With the mama and the child, they can understand each other.

(Laughter)

TK: So, I'm quite sure--Portuguese won't communicate in Japanese, but they both talk in their ways, and then somehow, (chuckles) they communicate, I think.

FK: Did the Portuguese have any stores around here?

TK: No, I don't remember, though, Portuguese having business. Only now, you see, Mrs. Jose have a business in Kailua. Portuguese woman.

FK: So, they would mostly come here?

TK: Yeah, that's right. Those days, there were lots of stores. From down there, K. Yokoyama Store. Although Doris' Place came later.

But like Paul's Place . . .

FK: In Holualoa?

TK: Yeah. That's an old store there. But now, like Ota's Store is gone.

FK: Which Ota?

TK: Next to Paul's Place. That big building. That was a store. And this side, Yokoyama's is close. Two Yokoyamas are gone. Then, Doris' Place came up. So, in this section, I think, just Doris and myself.

FK: And then, Doris has the groceries, and you don't have any groceries.

TK: No, I don't have any grocery now.

FK: So, the next closest place would be . . .

TK: Paul's. Paul's Place.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: When you grew up, you were just with your father. How was it coming into a big family and then raising a big family?

TK: You mean, to get married in the big family?

FK: Uh huh, and then raising a big family.

TK: Well, I was young and I thought that was a hard thing. When my mother-in-law used to lecture, then I used to tell her, "Tell whatever you want to say. Someday, it will help me a lot." I (chuckles) used to say that to her. . . .

FK: Do you think it was good to have a big family and marry into a big family?

TK: Yeah, well, to have my own, I thought, because I was alone, see? I didn't have sister or brother to call. But now, at least, I have seven of my children. Even I'm not educated and good, but still they have a person to call "mama." (Chuckles)

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: Before, after you got married, from Holualoa, did you go to church?

TK: Yes, sure. We used to go.

FK: On what occasions did you go?

TK: Like hanamatsuri or Bon. Those days. My husband used to have a car, so we used to go. Church, every year, we used to go.

FK: How were these events at the church celebrated? I mean, was it only service or. . . .

TK: Oh, those days?

FK: Did they have food, too?

TK: Yeah, they did have. They did have food.

FK: Who prepared the food?

TK: Shee, I don't know. I never did go, so. I go to the church, but preparing the food, I don't know. I think all the people nearby does.

FK: But you enjoyed the food?

(Laughter)

TK: Yeah, those days. Like Bon, they used to have a Bon dance.

FK: Oh, you had Bon dances from before?

TK: Yeah.

FK: Did you dance, too?

TK: No, I never did.

FK: Oh, when did you start dancing?

TK: Retire age, I start to. (Laughs)

FK: Did you ever dress up in nihongi, or kimono to go anywhere?

TK: You mean, not for dancing. To visit people? No, I never did wear. Only when I got married, I wear kimono, that's all. Japanese style, you have to comb the hair in Japanese way, too. Those days, we used to have long hair. So, they comb our hair.

FK: Makeup, too?

TK: Yeah. The lady will make up for you.

FK: Oh, there's somebody who does that?

TK: Mm hmm.

FK: Must have been exciting.

(Laughter)

TK: Exciting.

FK: How did you feel?

TK: I don't know.

(Laughter)

TK: Too young to remember or to be happy.

(Laughter)

FK: At these church functions, how was the attendance before?

TK: You mean, in Sunday school or something like that?

FK: Like hanamatsuri or Bon?

TK: Yeah, there used to be lots of people. I think, those days, maybe, church, those place were the place that people will go. They don't have too much of other kind of activities, no? Like these days.

FK: TV?

TK: Oh, now, TV, so nobody care to go to church.

(Laughter)

FK: In the old days, it seems like the reverend used to go around to help families with different things. Paperwork or. . . .

TK: Shee, that, I don't know.

FK: So, even from this far in Holualoa, you went all the way to Daifukuji?

TK: Mm hmm [yes].

FK: Did other people from Holualoa travel all that way, too?

TK: I remember Mrs. Furuuchi and the husband used to come. Mr. Furuuchi used to help a lot in church, I think.

FK: Shee, that's a big event, then, for some?

TK: Yeah. Others, I don't remember who was going. But--I don't know--somehow, Mrs. Furuuchi, I remember that her husband. . . . I was just thinking, "Oh, the young couple yō otera mairu ne," to omotte kara. . . . washi mita kara. [Having seen them, I thought to myself, "That young couple sure attends church a lot."] I still remember.

FK: In your half-retirement-and-half-working time, you seem to do a lot of travelling. Where are some of the places you've been to?

TK: You mean, travelling? Well, let me see, where did we go? First we went up to the states, to Canada, and before coming back, we went to Mexico City.

FK: So, you've been around the continental Mainland?

TK: Mm hmm [yes]. Not all over, but, yeah?

FK: How about the others?

TK: Then, few years later, went to Europe.

FK: Oh, Europe, too? And you went to Japan.

TK: Then, was last year, we went to Japan. And also went to Australia and (chuckles) New Zealand.

FK: You've been just about everywhere.

(Laughter)

FK: How do you feel about having come from Wahiawa, and then worked so hard, and how it is today? How do you feel about your life in Kona?

TK: Well, now is the best time. I enjoy it.

(Laughter)

TK: Even though the customers rush me around, I'm still pleased.

FK: That's good. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF KONA

Volume I

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